CALIFORNIA GIS COUNCIL Subcommittee On Forming Regional GIS Councils

First Draft Proposal February 21, 2002

Request for consideration: The Subcommittee on Regions requests that the California GIS Council review this initial proposal and provide feedback on it, so that the Subcommittee may revised it and bring back to the Council at its next meeting for adoptions.

I. Background

The California GIS Council at its meeting of November 28, 2001, established a **Regional GIS Council Subcommittee** to develop a consensus recommendation on how to establish operational areas for The Council. The California GIS Council Charter, adopted November 28, 2001, identified the role of Regional GIS Councils as follows:

- C. 2. Regional GIS councils will review The Council's reports to provide recommendations on policy alignment with local and regional GIS needs and be a focal point for partnerships to build California's geographic information infrastructure. The number, geographic breakdown, and resources needed to support these meetings will be determined by The Council.
- C. 3. The Regional Standing Committee, comprised of liaisons form California's Regional Councils, will advise The Council, The Steering Committee, and/or the Geographic Information Officer on the appropriateness of alignment of its proposals with regional priorities.

The three goals listed in the Statewide Council Charter are:

- 1. **Planning:** To identify California's geographic information needs and priorities and to promote cooperation in meeting these needs.
- 2. **Collaborative policy development:** To serve as the primary forum for members to seek consensus on policies that promote development and dissemination of a comprehensive GIS infrastructure in California.
- 3. **Funding:** To leverage existing funding and develop new partnerships and resources to build and maintain California's geographic information infrastructure.

II. Subcommittee Proposal for Council Consideration and Feedback:

A. Leverage existing regional collaborations:

Following on the theme outlined in the *State of California Regions* (April 2001), by the California Center for Regional Leadership, we have the opportunity to work in new ways. To solve problems, we can..."join together to think and act in ways at the regional level." We have the opportunity to move forward by collaborating at a regional level in ways that shed traditional intellectual and institutional approaches. Most importantly, the Council can use Regional GIS Councils to develop a linkage to existing regional GIS collaborations and encourage all California jurisdictions to be involved in regional GIS collaboration.

Local governments are the key stakeholders in the long-term development and maintenance of California's Geographic Information Infrastructure. Regional GIS Councils that leverage existing regional GIS collaborations can maintain their focus on local government priorities *and* participate in statewide collaborations to achieve a California GIS, which is of interest to all levels of government. Regional GIS Councils also provide a forum for collaboration with other participants, including: utilities, special districts, educational institutions, non-profits, private sector, and local offices/regions of state/federal agencies. Indeed, many of the regional collaboratives in place include a broad cross-section of public and private entities and have partnerships with state and federal agencies.

B. Determining How to Encourage Regional Participation:

To maximize local government participation, regional councils must reflect existing local patterns of GIS participation, relationships, and collaboration. Over the next year, the Council would conduct outreach to existing regional GIS collaborations, inviting them to apply for designation as a Regional GIS Council.

The criteria the Council would look for in a potential Regional GIS Council would be:

- A regional effort that includes multiple jurisdictions
- There is a local convening organization to support the collaboration
- All local jurisdictions in its geographic area are welcome to participate
- The group is willing to commit to the duties of a Regional GIS Council (articulated in section E)

Since one of the main purposes of the Council is to promote development of a comprehensive California GIS, it is important that every area of the State be included in a Regional GIS Council. If a local government jurisdiction has not been included in any existing regional collaboration, the Council will encourage neighboring Regional GIS Councils to reach out to these jurisdictions. To minimize the confusion of new participants, overlapping regions would generally be discouraged and if they exist, the Council would ask that they work closely with each other to eliminate overlaps and to coordinate efforts.

C. Benefits of Participation

It is important that the Council's outreach to existing regional GIS collaborations articulate the benefits of participation. In the short term, the main benefit to local and regional government is the opportunity to participate as an equal partner with the state and federal government in shaping the development of the Council and its efforts to develop a statewide GIS. As the Council matures, the benefits will grow as opportunities to work on projects of state, local and federal interest emerge. Regional GIS Councils, local governments and other regional participants shall not be required to pay dues for their participation.

D. Evolutionary Process

Local governments are the key stakeholders in the long-term development and maintenance of California's geographic information infrastructure. It will be the local agencies in California that will create the base maps, commit substantial resources and lead in the development of partnerships that further the goals of the California GIS Council. This fact is demonstrated in the attached map which identifies twenty-five (25) existing local GIS collaboratives in the state. These collaboratives cover forty-five (45) of the fifty-eight counties This map is only an *initial* survey of existing collaborations. Several local governments are in the early stages of developing multi-county partnerships. It is important to note that the process of developing Regional GIS Councils will evolve over time as these local government partnerships evolve. The Subcommittee intention is that over the next year, the Council would develop relationships with Regional GIS Councils that cover the entire state of California.

E. Process Recommendation for forming Regional GIS Councils:

- Council conduct outreach to regional collaborations articulating benefits
- Regional GIS collaborations apply for designation as a Regional GIS Council. The Council would ask regional groups to commit to following duties:
 - ⇒ Adopt a charter or other governing document that promotes the California GIS Council.
 - ⇒ Hold Quarterly meetings and post agendas and minutes on the California GIS Council web site.
 - ⇒ Invite all existing local users to participate in the Regional GIS Council activities.
 - ⇒ Appoint a liaison to be members of the Council's Standing Subcommittee on Regions. The liaisons would attend the California GIS Council meetings and Regional Council Subcommittee meetings to report on GIS activities and facilitate collaboration opportunities.
 - ⇒ Review and comment on proposed policies of the California GIS Council.
 - ⇒ Develop GIS Project partnerships consisting of local, regional, state and federal GIS users.
 - ⇒ Post Regional GIS partnerships on the California GIS Council web site.
- California GIS Council Actions to Support Regional GIS Councils:
 - ⇒ Conduct outreach to existing collaborations
 - ⇒ Designate Regional GIS Councils that meet the criteria
 - ⇒ In support of Regional GIS Councils, the California GIS Council will host a web site that will allow the Regional GIS Councils to post agendas and minutes.
 - ⇒ The California GIS Council will review the extent of all regional councils operational areas after a minimum 2-year trial period and recommend modifications as needed to ensure that the entire state is included.